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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000455

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA AMBASSADOR QUINN, NSC FOR AHARRIMAN AND KAMEND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/30/2016

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: SENLIS COUNCIL- A GROWING PROBLEM TO GOA CN EFFORTS

Classified By: ADCM ANGUS SIMMONS FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) Summary: The Senlis Council, a self-described international drug policy think tank recently released a "research" report on poppy eradication. The report concludes that eradication will cause irreparable damage to reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan. Accordingly, the Council is planning multiple initiatives to hinder eradication efforts. The GOA is upset by the Council's recent actions and the Ministry of Interior has drafted a letter reminding the Council of Afghanistan's Constitution and laws that make opium cultivation illegal and call for eradication of the same. The letter informs the Senlis Council that as long as it conducts business in Afghanistan it must abide by these laws. The Council's initiatives complicate GOA CN efforts and send confusing and potentially dangerous messages to farmers, government officials and Parliamentarians. The GOA has indicated that it is ready to take action to curtail the damage that the Council may cause. The US and UK support the GOA's efforts to rein in the Senlis Council. End Summary.

2.(U) On January 23, the Senlis Council, a self-described international drug policy think tank, released a "research" report on poppy eradication in Afghanistan. As stated in the Council's January 23 press release the report concludes that poppy eradication is destructive and if eradication strategies are pursued irreparable damage to reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan will occur.

3. (C) Senlis Council has announced in its press release it would take three actions to combat eradication. First, the Council has drafted a law prohibiting eradication of poppy in Afghanistan and is reportedly planning to meet with the Afghan Parliament to propose the new law and lobby for its passage. UNODC reports that members of the Senlis Council have met with Parliament Speaker Qanooni and provided airline tickets to Parliament members to utilize for travel to London for the upcoming Afghan Post Bonn conference (January 31 and February 1) and have provided briefcases and book bags with the Senlis Council logo to select Parliamentarians.

4. (U) Second, the Council has announced the launch of a Farmer's Defense Fund, allegedly established to provide assistance to farmers who are victims of forced eradication. Reportedly, the fund will offer legal assistance to farmers in the event of an arrest, offer financial support to families of imprisoned farmers, help farmers to take legal action against those responsible for eradication of their crops and assist farmers in obtaining support for the development of alternative livelihoods.

5. (U) Third, the Council has also announced that it will sponsor the April 2006 Farmer's Jirga in Kabul. The Council is inviting provinces to send a farmer representative to attend the jirga "to become part of the debate and discussion regarding drug policy in Afghanistan."

6. (C) Embassy Kabul's Counter Narcotics Task Force (CNTF) Director Doug Wankel has met with the British Embassy Drugs Team (BEDT) to discuss the Senlis Council's recent actions. Both the Embassy and the BEDT agree that the Senlis Council is becoming a problem for the Government of Afghanistan's CN programs. Discussions about the Council have also been held with Minister Qaderi of the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN), who has advised that the GOA is also concerned and is taking action. Minister Qaderi said that a letter has been drafted by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to inform the Senlis Council about the Afghan Constitution's position on the elimination of opium cultivation and cites the relevant GOA laws that make opium illegal and call for eradication of the same. Minister Qaderi advises the Embassy that the letter will tell the Senlis Council that it is expected to abide by the GOA constitution and laws while conducting business in Afghanistan. Minister Qaderi said once the letter is delivered (circa the first week of February), the GOA will monitor the Senlis Council's activities and will take appropriate action if the GOA feels that the Council is violating Afghan law or its constitution.

7. (C) Minister Qaderi said he expects to "run into" the Senlis Council representatives while he is attending the Post Bonn conference in London (January 31-February 1) and will inform them of Afghanistan's displeasure with their program

as described in the January 23 press release.

18. (C) Comment: The Senlis Council and its actions are becoming a problem for the GOA's CN program. The Council's initiatives not only complicate the GOA's CN efforts, but send confusing and potentially dangerous signals to farmers, government officials and Parliamentarians. The GOA has indicated that it is time to take action to curtail the damage that the Council can cause if left unchecked. The US and UK Embassies will continue to support the GOA in its efforts to rein in the Senlis Council. End Comment.
NORLAND